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portions of those cells which seemed to be least matured were longer than those of their older neighbors, subclavate or spindle-shaped and rounded at the extremities. The others are cylindrical or slightly widening downwards and shorter than the former by the invagination of the terminal portion of the ectocyst. This has the effect of producing the angular appearance of the orifice, so familiar in the older species; but while that is generally quadrangular, this has frequently five or more sides. The younger cells are nearly transparent, but they darken with age and become somewhat encrusted with adherent particles and overgrown by commensal parasites, *Limnias*, *Pyricola*, and the like.

The polypides are shy, but fond of the light, and when otherwise undisturbed will remain for a long time protruded in the full glare of microscopic illumination. It can then be seen that the lophophore is circular, without epistome, supporting ordinarily twenty tentacles, taking the shape of a claret glass and opening upwards. (Nineteen and twenty-one tentacles have been doubtfully counted, while the above-mentioned number is frequent; *P. Ehrenbergi* is universally stated to have but sixteen). A peculiarity of the tentacles is the presence upon the outer median line of each, of a rather sparsely filled series of quiescent setæ, in strong contrast with the rapidly moving cilia around them.

The development of this polyp from the ovum, of which interesting hints have been obtained, and its internal structural peculiarities, are reserved for further study, and if satisfactory results shall have been attained, they will be treated of in a later paper. The nearly simultaneous observation of this species in three distinct localities, and its abundance in each, indicates that it is probably not uncommon, and excites surprise that it does not appear to have been previously noticed.

AUGUST 12.

MR. THOMAS MEEHAN, Vice-President, in the chair.

Fifteen persons present.

A Large Zircon.—Dr. A. E. Foote recorded the discovery of the largest crystal of zircon ever known. It is $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, 4 inches on one face and $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches on the other. It undoubtedly originally weighed twelve pounds, but owing to a small portion being lost by fracturing it now weighs but eleven and three-quarter pounds. The largest crystal ever known before weighed less than three pounds. The crystal is doubly terminated, and, though somewhat broken in taking out nearly all the pieces were saved. At one end there are two terminations and one of these

was broken off in some great convulsion of the earth's surface. This had been separated from the main crystal by a piece of orthoclase that had unmistakably been formed since the rupture of the crystal. Such a fact is of great importance in studying the geological history of the formation. The locality is Brudinele, Renfrew Co., Ontario, Canada, and the rock is a vein of pink feldspar in a Laurentian gneiss. It is associated with sphene and crystals of peristerite (?). Some of the faces of the latter show the moonstone reflections very plainly. Cavities once filled with calcite (now mostly dissolved away) occur in the vein. There are also some small crystals that need further examination.

AUGUST 19.

Mr. J. H. REDFIELD in the chair.

Fifteen persons present.

The death of W. L. Schaeffer, a member, was announced.

AUGUST 26.

Mr. J. H. REDFIELD in the chair.

Fourteen persons present.

The death of James L. Claghorn, a member, was announced.

Edward P. Bliss and Ralph W. Seiss, M.D., were elected members.

SEPTEMBER 2.

Rev. H. C. McCook, D.D., Vice-President, in the chair.

Twenty-one persons present.

On the wide Distribution of some American Sponges.—Allusion having been made to the wide distribution of certain species of sponges over the North American continent, Mr. E. PORTS, referring to the fresh-water sponge fauna of this country, said, that *Spongilla fragilis*, the first species named in America, described by Dr. Leidy in 1851 from specimens collected near Philadelphia, had since been found abundantly along the Atlantic coast from Florida to Nova Scotia. It had been gathered at several points along the St. Lawrence and in the great lakes, through the middle continent, and in the far west had been described by Dr. Bowerbank, in 1863, under the name of *S. Lordii*, as found in the lakes and streams flowing from the Cascade Range in British Columbia,